



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

February 1, 2005

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for February 2005

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for February 2005. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/. If you would like to be added to a Listserv to receive the Summary of OPI Activities each month, please register at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/regforms/OPIActivities/>.

Office of the State Superintendent

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for January 2005:

- Was sworn in for her second four-year term as State Superintendent and hosted an Inaugural reception at OPI for staff and friends
- Participated in the Governor's reception line at the Capitol on the evening of the Inaugural
- Attended "A New Day" celebration of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Participated in the monthly meetings of the Land Board, OPI Cabinet, Leadership Group, Ed Forum and the Board of Public Education
- Presented testimony at legislative committee hearings
- Met with representatives from the College Board regarding AP classes
- Met with Governor Schweitzer regarding Montana education issues
- Spoke at the Young Ag Couples conference in Helena
- Met with a 4-H student leaders from Hill County
- Attended the Governor's State of the State Address
- Presented the OPI agency budget and the Distribution to K-12 Schools budget to the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education on January 17-20
- Spoke to the Helena Substitute teachers
- Participated as a panelist at the Burton K Wheeler Conference on School Funding
- Spoke at Head Start Day at the Capitol
- Made a presentation to the House Select Committee on Education regarding current education issues
- Met with representatives of the Montana Hospital Association regarding Health Occupation School programs
- Attended Information Technology Day at the Capitol, which highlighted OPI's On-line Educator License Renewal and OPI's use of video-on-demand
- Interviewed on TV, radio and newspapers through the month
- Attended hearings of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education regarding Indian Education for All
- Attended Senator Burns and Senator Baucus' addresses during joint sessions of the Legislature

"It is our mission to advocate, communicate, educate and be accountable to those we serve."

Save the Date – State of Education Address is February 11th at 1:00 PM

Students, educators and trustees across the state can view State Superintendent McCulloch's State of Education address at the moment of delivery. With the use of video streaming technology, the live broadcast can be viewed on a personal computer.

The State of Education Address before Montana's 59th Legislature will be at 1:00 PM (Mountain Time) on February 11, 2005 and will be broadcast live via the Internet at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/streamer/Legislature/>.

Have you considered a government, business, or computer science class watching the address? Perhaps your trustees or parent Council would like to meet for lunch during the address? If you are interested in using this exciting opportunity to view Superintendent McCulloch address the legislature, we would like to know.

We highly recommend testing your computer configuration before the live event. For detailed technical instructions, click on <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Supt/NewsStories/0598FD6DBC.nclnk>. If you need technical assistance, call Internet Services Help Desk at 444-1626, or consult the QuickTime Help on the web at the OPI Web page under the Get Answers tab.

Please let us know if anyone in your school district is planning to capture the State of Address live on February 11th. OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi at 444-1641 or jlombardi@mt.gov.

OPI Legislative Updates

To help keep you informed of K-12 public education issues this Legislative session, OPI has created a webpage <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Superintendent/LegUpdates05.html> to keep you informed. The OPI 2005 Legislature Page provides links to the Legislature, looking up bills and education committees. There is a direct link for information on OPI-sponsored bills, which will be continually updated to add the Superintendent's testimonies. Below are approaching key legislative dates:

- February 2, 2005 3:00 PM
[HB 47](#), Full-Time Kindergarten Hearing in the House Education Committee
- February 11, 2005 1:00 PM
State of Education address by State Superintendent Linda McCulloch
- February 11, 2005 3:00 PM
[HB125](#), K-12 Base Aid Hearing in the House Select Education

Legislators to Visit Full Day Kindergarten: February 2

A Legislative Yellow School Bus Tour has been scheduled for members of the Senate Education and Cultural Resources Committee, House Education Committee and House Select Education Committee for February 2, 2005. Superintendent McCulloch's Yellow School Bus Tours are an informal way to learn about the current situations and diverse needs of schools across Montana. This Legislative tour will visit Bryant Elementary School in Helena to listen and learn about their full-time Kindergarten program. OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi, jlombardi@mt.gov or 444-1641.

OPI Partners with DNRC and Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission for Arbor Day

The Montana Urban & Community Forestry (UCF) Program partnered with the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission and State Superintendent Linda McCulloch to provide a curriculum entitled, "Celebrating Trees" which is available to educators on the OPI website at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Lewis&Clark>. The curriculum is designed to provide a wealth of knowledge to both students and teachers about the Lewis & Clark journey as well as highlight many of the natural resources encountered by the Corps of Discovery, most notably trees.

Montana UCF will provide every school that submits a poster for the 2005 Montana Arbor Day Poster Contest with a Lewis & Clark Ponderosa Pine seedling to plant at its school in celebration of Arbor Day and the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. The 2005 Arbor Day celebration is our day to celebrate all that trees have provided us and will provide us in the next 200 years. Requests or inquiries for more information can be mailed to Kelley Gundale, 2705 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804 or by sending an e-mail to kgundale@mt.gov.

Custer, Dawson, Richland and Roosevelt Counties...help with utility bills

Here's an opportunity to help the families of low-income children in your school to receive assistance with their utility bills. The Office of Public Instruction has posted a letter on its website that your school can use/modify to notify parents about available energy assistance monies. The target audience is the parents of children who are eligible for free breakfast/lunch programs. The link for the letter is <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/REAMDU2005.pdf>

The energy assistance monies are available through the Universal Systems Benefits bill assistance program. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of Energy Share, the Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association, Montana Dakota Utilities, and Action for Eastern Montana for their efforts in promoting this program.

OPI helped to get the word out about this program last year, and it paid off by increasing the numbers of families that applied for assistance. We appreciate your efforts to promote this program to support low-income children and their families. Contact Sheri Shepherd at Action for Eastern Montana at sheri@aemt.org or 1-800-227-0703.

Board of Public Education Meeting

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting March 10-11, 2005, at their office building, 2500 Broadway, Helena. Tentative agenda information items from the Office of Public Instruction include: the Superintendent's Report, a No Child Left Behind Update, and Assessment and Accreditation updates. Agenda action items include Accreditation issues. Contacts: Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Dennis "Bud" Williams (406) 444-5643.

Top Educational Challenges Identified by the Northwest RAC

Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams and Doug Reisig, Superintendent of Hellgate Elementary District, have been appointed by the US Secretary of Education to serve on a regional advisory committee (Northwest RAC), which is charged with conducting an assessment of technical assistance needs of states, districts, schools, and other education stakeholders in the Northwest region. In March, the regional advisory committee will submit a report to the Secretary that will help the US Department of Education establish funding priorities for a set of new regional technical assistance centers.

The Northwest RAC has identified a set of top challenges facing the region for improving student achievement. These challenges have been posted in the Northwest region's public forum for review and comment. Click on the following link, to view these challenges:
<http://www.rac-ed.org/default.aspx?tabid=342&view=topic&forumid=103&postid=476>

Your input is an important part of the educational needs assessment process. If you wish to comment on these challenges, please login to the website. Click on the public forums link for the Northwest region, and select Public Forum. Click on the top challenges topic to review the challenges, and then click Add Reply to post a comment. OPI Contact: Bud Williams, 444-5643, or budwilliams@mt.gov.

The minutes and transcript of the January public meeting for the Northwest RAC is now available at the following link:

<http://www.rac-ed.org/Default.aspx?tabid=343&DMXModule=934&EntryId=550>
To hear a recording of this meeting, go to: <http://audioevent.mshow.com/202107/>
Listening to the recording of this meeting requires either Windows Media Player (<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/mediaplayer>) or Real Player (<http://www.real.com/products/player>).

Education Licensure

License Renewal Audit: In early January, the Educator Licensure Division sent letters to educators who renewed their licenses as of July 1, 2004, requesting documentation of reported renewal activities. Because the on-line process is so new, we chose to audit 100% of those on-line renewals to verify our processes and ensure that on-line renewal will provide the same or higher quality of service to Montana's educators as the existing method.

Professional Development for Renewal Units: Information and forms for Renewal Unit pre-approval have been moved to the Educator Licensure webpage at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Cert/Index.html>. Educator Licensure assumed administration of renewal unit activity in mid-December. If an educator wishes to receive renewal units for a professional development activity provided by an organization other than an approved provider, the activity must be submitted to OPI and approved before attending the activity. Educator Licensure can be reached at 406-444-3150 or cert@mt.gov.

Teacher Loan Forgiveness -- The Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act (P.L. 108-409)

Teachers who teach math, science, or special education & who have taught for five years in a Title I school may be eligible for new loan forgiveness limits. The Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act (P.L. 108-409) authorizes up to \$17,500 in loan forgiveness to eligible highly qualified math, science & special education teachers. This increase of \$12,500 above the previous loan limits is meant to ease the shortage of teachers in key subject areas. For more information, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/updates/2005/0124.html>
<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN0414.html>.

Assessment

The special January edition of OPI's online assessment newsletter, ***JUMP Join Us in Measuring Progress*** is online at

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Jan05AssessNews.pdf>.

The newsletter contains important information about the February 8th test coordinator training. To register for the test coordinator training, click on

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/TAT05/Index.html>. The deadline for registration is Feb. 4. OPI Contact: Judy Snow, Assessment Director, 444-3656 or jsnow@mt.gov.

Future of NRT Survey

In the December/January 2005 JUMP, a survey relating to the future of the Iowa Tests (the NRT) was announced. The number of respondents was too small for the Board of Public Education (BPE) to use in its ongoing research about the future of the NRT. System test coordinators have been sent the link, user name, and password for the survey. We ask that all systems, even those which responded to the December/January survey, respond to this survey. Results from the earlier survey will not be calculated. The deadline for completing the survey is February 21, 2005 at noon. Thank you for your participation. OPI Contact: Judy Snow, Assessment Director, 444-3656 or jsnow@mt.gov.

NAEP Assessment Activities January 24 through March 5, 2005

Over half of Montana's schools have been selected to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment. NAEP is sometimes referred to as "the Nation's Report Card," where states can compare educational achievement in reading, mathematics, science, writing, and other subjects in grades 4 and 8 with other states and the Nation. Superintendents and principals should be aware that trained staff members recruited by the National Center of Educational Statistics, many of which are retired Montana educators, give these assessments. Activities are currently underway for final preparations of this assessment such as:

- contacting school coordinators for updates to student lists;
- sending out parent notification letters;
- survey questionnaires to be completed by principals; and
- survey questionnaires to be completed by the teachers and IEP teams.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this assessment, please contact Donna O'Neill by telephone, (406) 444-0793 or by e-mail, doneill@mt.gov.

School Budgeting and Accounting

MAEFAIRS Spring Enrollment Due to OPI February 11, 2005

The February 1, 2005, MAEFAIRS Spring Enrollment count is due to OPI by February 11, 2005. All enrollment must be received by this date in order for FY06 Preliminary Budget Data Sheets to be issued March 1, 2005. OPI Contact: Tal Redpath at (406)444-3024 or redpath@mt.gov

Preliminary Budget Data Sheets for FY 2004-05 will be posted on the OPI website on March 1. The Budget Data Sheets reflect direct state aid, ANB, special education block grant rates and disproportionate cost funding, and GTB subsidies. Note that OPI must receive all February 1 Spring Enrollment Reports for districts statewide before the March 1 data can be issued, due to impacts of ANB on the special education funding distribution formulas. OPI Contact: Bonnie Maze, (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@mt.gov.

Budgeting Tools for FY2005-06

In an effort to provide school districts with tools to ESTIMATE budgets for the FY05-06 school year, the division of School Finance has made available a General Fund Budgeting Spreadsheet and Draft MAEFAIRS. The spreadsheet will allow districts to estimate the general

fund budget using the current law including a 2.1% increase in entitlements and to change constants. The spreadsheet is posted on the OPI website at the following link: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/excel.html>. Districts should remember that during a legislative year, budgeting figures are not final until the end of the legislative session.

Draft MAEFAIRS will give registered MAEFAIRS users the opportunity to estimate budgets in all budgeted funds using current year entitlements. To access Draft MAEFAIRS, go to the OPI website, click on the IRIS tab, enter username and password and then click on the Draft MAEFAIRS icon (blue check). OPI Contact: Nica Carte, (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@mt.gov

2005 Elections Handbook

The handbook for the May 3, 2005, trustee and general fund election has been updated and is posted on the OPI website at the following link:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/SchoolFinance/forms/ElecHandbook.pdf> OPI Contact: Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@mt.gov

CSCT Audits – 100%

As announced at last fall's Medicaid workshops, DPHHS will be auditing 100% of the school districts and special education cooperatives participating in the Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Services program (CSCT). This audit is pretty much done at the mental health provider's office. Check out the following web site for a full explanation of the audit:

<http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/hpsd/medicaid/medicaid2/pdf/schoolcsct0804.pdf>.

The CSCT program has grown to \$4.5 million in FY04. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt at (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov

FY2004-05 1st Semester Bus Route Claim Forms

The FY 2004-05 first semester Bus Route Reimbursement (TR-6) forms are posted on the OPI website at the following link: <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/0000D9D9-80000007/0001BCE6-80000007/?WasRead=1>. These forms are due to the county superintendent by February 1 and to OPI by February 15. Claims received after February 15 will be paid with second semester claims. Please check the forms carefully and report any inaccuracies to Maxine Mougeot, 406-444-3096 or email mmougeot@mt.gov.

Department of Education Services

National School Change Awards

The Fordham University Graduate School of Education, American Association of School Administrators, and Pearson Education are inviting nominations of schools for the Sixth Annual National School Change Award for schools that have changed significantly for the better. Six schools are selected annually for this recognition based on four criteria including how meaningful the change, how deep and broad the change, how the change is focused, and how the change is measured. For application materials, contact Spencer Sartorius, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction (406) 444-4434.

2005-06 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program. The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program is funded from the Title IV, Part A, Subpart 6, Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Higher Education Amendments of 1992.

Approximately 23 scholarships are awarded each year to outstanding Montana seniors and graduates of GED programs. Each scholarship is \$1,500 annually and may be renewed three times during undergraduate study, if the students maintain eligibility. The purpose of the

scholarship is “to promote student excellence and achievement and to recognize exceptionally able students who show promise of continued excellence.” Scholarships will be equitably distributed across geographic regions of the state. Applications will be read and rated by a team of reviewers.

An applicant must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Be a graduating senior or a graduating GED student for the 2004-05 school year;
- Have a 3.60 or higher GPA in a college preparatory curriculum and have a cumulative score of 1380 on the SAT, or 30 on the ACT;
- Use the scholarship award for the first year of study, renewable for up to three additional years, as a full-time student at any public or private institution of higher education, as defined by 34 CFR-668.2. Proprietary institutions are not included and neither are nonprofit institutions that only provide training programs of less than one year; and
- Be a resident of Montana and a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident of the United States.

The applications must be postmarked by March 4, 2005. If you have any questions, please call Carol Gneckow, (406) 444-2417 or e-mail, cgneckow@state.mt.us. The 2005-06 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program Application can be found on the Web page <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Scholarships/index.html>.

Accreditation Division

Competitive Technology Grants for High Poverty/High Need School Districts

The ESEA Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education through Technology (Ed Tech) provides funding for competitive technology grants to eligible districts. The application, including eligibility and application information will be available by Tuesday, February 8, 2005, on the OPI web site <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/EdTech/Index.html>. Completed grants must be postmarked to the OPI by April 18, 2005.

Eligibility for the grants are highly focused by the No Child Left Behind legislation. Eligible districts are high poverty districts with a Title I program in need of improvement or in corrective action and have not redirected any portion of their Title II, Part D funds, or a high poverty district with a high technology need (defined in the application) and have not redirected any portion of their Title II, Part D funds. Currently the list of eligible districts is small. However, other high poverty districts may be eligible when the OPI is able to examine the technology need data (TAGLIT data) from the districts. The application contains further information on the technology need data and eligibility. For information, contact Michael Hall, (406) 444-4422, mhall@mt.gov, or Lorraine Burns, (406) 444-1852.

Montana Integrated Technology Plan Framework

Integration of ESEA Title II, Part D (Ed Tech) and Universal/Service Fund - E-Rate Technology Plan Requirements

In December 2004, a group of Montana educators met to review the technology program requirements for the No Child Left Behind Act-Ed Tech and E-Rate programs. Understanding that two different sets of technology plan requirements were confusing, the educators set forth to conceptualize an integrated framework that would meet the requirements for both programs and provide guidance in the writing and rewriting of local technology plans. The *MT Integrated Technology Plan Framework* has been completed and is available on the OPI web site on both the E-Rate and Title II, Part D web pages, <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/EdTech/Index.html>. The document is posted in an Adobe PDF file, however is available as a Microsoft Word file by e-

mailing Lorraine Burns at lburns@mt.us. Use of the framework, while voluntary, is recommended as it helps districts ensure compliance with both federal programs for technology funding. Please inform your local technology teams of the availability of this document.

Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America), a Career and Technical Student Organization, will be having their second annual HOSA State Leadership Conference in Great Falls, March 13 – 15, 2005. Students will be competing in events such as Nursing Assisting, EMT, First Aid/CPR, Veterinarian Assisting, Physical Therapy Assisting, Researched Persuasive Speaking, Job Seeking Skills and many other events. HOSA targets students enrolled in Health Science Programs and those interested in pursuing careers in the health care field. Currently, there are chapters in Butte High, Great Falls High, CMR, Skyline Alternative High School, Billings Career Center, Custer County High School, Helena High School, Flathead High School, Miles City Community College, and MSU – Great Falls College of Technology. The Health Sciences Education Programs are seeking to meet the present and predicted needs for health care workers within a health care delivery system. Health Sciences investigates the health care delivery system, its services, occupations, and related sciences. Many students are gaining entry level certifications such as Certified Nurses Aides, Emergency Medical Technicians and Pharmacy Technicians. If you are interested in Health Sciences Education or implementing a HOSA Chapter in your school please call Angie Collins at 444-0714 or email angelac@mt.gov.

Special Education Division

The Special Education Report to the 2005 Legislature, which was presented to legislators the week of January 18 by Bob Runkel, Director of Special Education, is now available on the OPI Web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SpecEd/index.html>. Scroll down to the Site Directory and then Data Reports. This report provides data on special education student numbers and funding. It also includes a summary of Montana's Annual Performance Report which was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in March of 2004. If you have questions or problems opening the document, contact Pat Reichert at 406-444-4430, or e-mail at preichert@mt.gov.

Medicaid Administrative Claiming Program (MAC)

The Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) Program allows school districts and cooperatives to be reimbursed for some of the costs associated with administration of school-based health services that are not claimable under the Medicaid Direct Services Program. The MAC program started with 12 schools and cooperatives in October 2003, and has increased to 70 participating schools and cooperatives as of January 2005, representing over 95,000 general education (ANB) students from these districts.

Currently, the Medicaid Administrative Claiming program has reimbursed districts with over \$1.8 million in federal monies during its first year of implementation. According to statewide averages for the first year, a district can expect to receive approximately \$5 to \$7 per ANB each calendar quarter. Reimbursement amounts do vary according to each county's Medicaid eligibility rate.

Prior to the beginning of each calendar quarter, each participating school district or cooperative submits a list of eligible personnel that provide administrative functions connected to health-related services and outreach. Staff are then selected at random from the statewide personnel pool to complete time studies during the quarter. At the end of each quarter, the school districts and cooperatives submit their financial data report to DPHHS. This data is used to determine

the reimbursement amount for each district or cooperative based on the statewide time study results.

Districts wishing to participate in the upcoming April to June 2005 quarter must be enrolled and have their participant listings submitted to mtmac@mt.gov by March 1, 2005. Districts may enroll in the MAC program for the 2005-2006 school year by September 1, 2005.

Training for MAC Coordinators and Financial Officers will be available in Helena on Wednesday, February 23, from 1-4 p.m. Coordinators will learn how to implement the program, be shown how to train their time study participants, and informed of program changes. Financial reporting obligations will also be covered. This training is required for MAC Coordinators, but is also open to anyone wanting additional information. For registration and location information, contact sloewen@mt.gov.

If you have questions, or would like to receive more information regarding participation in the MAC Program, please contact Sara Loewen, MAC Program Officer, at 406-444-4162 or sloewen@mt.gov.

Paraprofessional Recognition Week, January 31-February 4, 2005

The week of January 31-February 4, 2005, has been proclaimed as Paraprofessional Recognition Week. OPI has posted a Certificate of Recognition on our website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SpecEd/ParaprofCert.pdf>. For more information about resources for paraprofessionals, go to <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/cspd/resources.html>.

In addition, on April 15, 2005, **Paraprofessionals of the Year and Para/Teacher Teams** from each CSPD Region will be recognized at the Montana Council for Exceptional Children Conference on Diverse Abilities in Billings.

For further information on paraprofessionals and staff development opportunities, please contact Susan Bailey-Anderson at (406)444-2046 or e-mail sbanderson@mt.gov.

Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

Title I Conference and High Priority Schools Institute

All districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are invited to the 2005 Title I Conference at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls on February 23 and 24, beginning with a Breakfast Buffet from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. each day and ending at 4:00 p.m. February 24. The cost of the conference is \$55 per participant. The day before the conference, February 22, will be the High Priority Schools/Districts Institute to which all schools and district identified for Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring have been invited. There will also be a Title I Directors meeting at 3:15 p.m. on February 22 after the Institute. For registration information and the conference agenda, click on <http://btc.montana.edu/conf/titleone/>.

Indian Education

In the past few months, following the Indian Education Summit in October 2004, OPI has enhanced its tools for communicating with schools and the public about Indian Education for All. Here are some of the recent activities:

- Created a webpage to host Summit materials, including pre-summit issue papers, summit presentations and working papers and post-summit documents.
- Organized all the summit materials, including executive summary, for posting on the web and dissemination to participants.

- Established a listserv for Summit participants and others interested in Indian Education for All.
- Presented the Summit overview to the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) and the Board of Public Education.
- Prepared a workplan for Governor Schweitzer's budget proposal for Indian Education for All - <http://governor.mt.gov/GovernorElectSchweitzerBudget.pdf> that requests a general fund appropriation of \$1,000,000 annually and 3.00 FTE, which drew upon information and recommendations garnered at the Summit.
- Responded to requests from Legislators on Indian Education. OPI's 2005 Legislature Page - <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Superintendent/LegUpdates05.html> can help you keep in touch with legislative activities concerning education.

This is an ongoing process. Until we have effectively closed the achievement gap, reduced the dropout rate and fully implemented Indian Education for All, it will take continued participation of many partners – legislators, public, educators, higher education, etc-- to create the change all students need. OPI is committed to the hard work and communication that it will take to move this work forward. For more information concerning the Indian Education for All, please contact OPI Indian Education Specialist Everall Fox at 444-3013, efox@mt.gov.

To register for the Indian Education Summit listserv, click on <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/IESummit/List.html>

Health Enhancement and Safety Division *Coordinated School Health*

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Information for Schools

Pertussis, or whooping cough, has surfaced in many of Montana's communities and schools in recent months. In fact, with 84 cases of the illness spread across 20 counties, Montana had the worst pertussis season since 1967. Approximately one-half of the cases reported in 2005 are school-aged.

When a school-aged case is identified, local health agencies will follow state and national standards and work closely with your school to minimize disruption and the transmission of the illness. Cases are not a cause for panic, generally do not require the exclusion of children who are not ill, and generally do not require the cancellation of school events. However, if not managed properly a single case can cause a great deal of disruption and confusion among parents, students and staff.

Investigation guidelines, tools and other resources have been developed to assist health agencies and schools with response to pertussis cases. Next week these materials will be available for your reference on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us/health/Index.html. On that page, look under Contemporary Health Notices for the pertussis information and guidelines. We encourage you to review the information and keep it as a reference in the event your school is affected. DPHHS Contact: Jim Murphy, Communicable Disease Specialist, 406-444-0274; e-mail: jmurphy@mt.gov.

On-Line Federal Grant Service

Federal grant-making agencies have collaborated to develop a one stop shop for finding and applying for federal grants. The U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice are represented in this group. www.grants.gov gives access to find and apply on-line; to

download, view and complete applications offline – then submit through the internet. Further information about the services is available through the website.

Big Sky Fit Kids Youth Wellness Program

The Big Sky State Games announce the Big Sky Fit Kids youth wellness program designed to improve physical activity and healthy eating habits. Schools have the chance to compete for one of three \$500 awards that can be used to promote those activities at the conclusion of the 3-month program. Participation is free and Big Sky Games provides support materials to assist Health Enhancement or other teachers to engage students. For more information, go to www.bigskyfitkids.org or call (406) 254-7426.

2004 School Health Profiles (Profiles) – released!

In March 2004, 93 percent of school principals and health educators completed questionnaires for the School Health Profiles. The *2004 School Health Profiles Report* and the complementary *2004 Summary Report* are available for downloading at www.opi.mt.gov/SHP. The Profiles is a measurement of health education; physical education; asthma management activities; school health policies related to HIV/AIDS prevention, tobacco use prevention, violence prevention, physical activity, and nutrition and food service; and family and community involvement in school health programs. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

2005 Youth Risk Behavior (YRBS)

The 2005 YRBS will be administered in participating schools during the week of February 21, 2005. A record number of schools have registered to participate in the YRBS, an anonymous and confidential survey in which students self-report on behaviors which address unintentional and intentional injuries, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors, nutrition and physical activity. School-specific data should be available in May 2005. School-specific data from previous years is available at www.opi.mt.gov/YRBS and click on <School-Specific Data>. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

School Nutrition Program

On-line Commodity Information for School Foodservice

Information on commodities is available to your school foodservice through the USDA Food Distribution Web site (www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/news/). Topics include Food Safety Recall Information; the School Programs Commodity Update Newsletter; Food Ordering and Customer Service (Focus) Bulletins; Program Regulations; a National Policy Database; Program Fact Sheets; and more. To obtain the latest recall information, report a dangerous product, or learn important safety tips, visit www.recalls.gov -- a "one stop shop" for U.S. Government recalls." For more information: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd, or School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Don't Forget Verification

The new Summary of Verification form is due to the School Nutrition Programs office by February 15, 2005. Schools are strongly encouraged to submit the Summary of Verification form as soon as possible after the December 15 deadline. Remember that in order to decrease the burden of verification next year, schools should get 100 percent response from households selected for verification. For more information: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Your Cooperative Bid Program

Keep your school's dollars in Montana! The Cooperative Bid Program was created especially for Montana schools, and exists to help them better meet the bottom line in their food service. The Cooperative Bid Program was implemented in 1980 to assist Montana schools in purchasing high-quality nutritious foods at reasonable prices. By combining purchase orders, all

participating schools are able to receive bid items at 25-40% off the regular vendor prices, and schools receive the same price regardless of size or location. A competitive bid is conducted twice a year in accordance with USDA regulations. The items (food, supplies, and customized products) included on the bid are determined by Montana schools through the Cooperative Bid Committee. If you are interested in learning more, or would like to purchase through the cooperative bid, please contact: School Nutrition Programs, Attn: Kennie Johnson, (406) 444-4412, kennie@mt.gov

The NEW Dietary Guidelines

"It's scientifically-based—and it's common sense."

Those were the words on Wednesday (January 12) of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson as he and Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman announced the release of the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Especially considering the epidemic of obesity we face in our country, our children need all the help they can get in understanding the relationships between food consumption, a healthy diet, physical fitness, and good health. The *Dietary Guidelines* will set the nation's policy direction for the next five years for all government nutrition programs, including the School Nutrition Programs. The key points of the new *Guidelines* are eating a variety of foods in moderation, paying attention to portion sizes and engaging in regular physical activity. Within this framework, all foods can fit into a healthful diet. For more information visit <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>, or contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-3532

National School Breakfast Week 2005: March 7-11, 2005

This year's National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) theme is "School Breakfast: Great Performances!" To help you gear up for this year's celebration, the Montana Team Nutrition Program is creating a National School Breakfast Week kit full of useful ideas and yummy recipes. Kits will be available by early February. If you are interested in receiving a kit this year, please contact: Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641, kbark@mt.gov

New Resources Available from Montana Team Nutrition

- *For school board members, school administrators, nutrition leaders in your schools:* *Healthy Students Learn More: the Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Montana Schools* showcases Montana schools which have taken action to assure that nutrition and physical activity are part of students' daily routines. School food service staff involvement is crucial in providing healthy foods, role modeling healthy behaviors, and providing nutrition education. You have an important job- nourishing our youth! This resource has great examples of school food services' opportunities to improve nutrition throughout the entire school system. Guidance for change and steps to get started are included in the booklet, as well as a complete list of nutrition, physical activity, and school wellness resources.

- *For educators, and school food service personnel or high school newspaper staff:*

Eat to Be Fit Informational Handouts

Montana Team Nutrition Program's newest resource is designed to provide accurate nutrition information to teens on hot nutrition topics. These are twelve double-sided handouts cover a variety of information from snacks, breakfast, weight management, supplements to sports nutrition and portion size. They can be used as a supplement to nutrition instruction, or for a basis of a bulletin board or newspaper article. This resource will be on OPI's Health Enhancement website soon. It can also be obtained from the Montana Team Nutrition Program.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of these resources, please contact: Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-564, kbark@mt.gov

The Meatrix: Solicitation from an Activist Group

Activist group Global Action Resource Center for the Environment (GRACE) has been sending information offering cash prizes to schools/teachers for incorporation of "The Meatrix" (<http://www.themeatrix.com>) into school curricula. "The Meatrix" is an activist-created, anti-beef cartoon containing misinformation about "factory farming," antibiotics and animal welfare, and is one of the most distributed and viewed pieces of content about meat consumption on the Web.

The Montana Beef Council strongly discourages publication and dissemination of this information to schools or teachers in our state. According to the Montana Beef Council, "The Meatrix" is a grossly inaccurate representation of the livestock industry that dangerously misleads youth, and purposefully uses a format targeted at school-aged children.

School Nutrition Programs supports Montana's beef industry and will be happy to send information about nutrition and beef. For more information visit www.beefnutrition.org or www.beef.org or contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501, or Charlene Schuster, Executive Director, Montana Beef Council, PO Box 5386, Helena, MT 50604, 406-442-5111, beefchar@mt.net

School Wellness Policy Web Site: New from Team Nutrition

If your school is interested in learning more about how to implement a school wellness policy (which will be required for all schools participating in the School Nutrition Programs by 2006) there is a new web page on the Team Nutrition web site. This website has information and resources to assist local schools in the process of setting up a policy. Updates will be added to the site as they are received. For more information, call School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501 or visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>.

HIV/AIDS/STD Program

PIR Day Offer

HIV/AIDS Teacher Training notices were sent to school curriculum development committees in January. The training provides information on HIV/AIDS, bloodborne pathogen and work site safety, age-appropriate teaching strategies and K-12 lesson plans focusing on decision making skills, critical thinking skills, abstinence and HIV/STD prevention education, and policy for HIV education, infected students and staff, and work site safety. Trainings are FREE and are scheduled at your school at your convenience. A 5-hour training provides an excellent PIR day educational opportunity for administrators, teachers, coaches, food service staff, bus drivers, custodians, playground aides and other staff. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

Upcoming HIV/AIDS/STD Teacher Trainings:

Helena – March 2, Wingate Inn, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Saco – April 11, Saco Public School, tentatively 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

HIV/AIDS Summer Institute

The 3-day HIV/AIDS Summer Institute for educators will be held in Helena at the Wingate Inn on June 13-15, 2005. The intensive training provides a wide range of activities and teaching strategies for use within a school's comprehensive health education program that address HIV/STD prevention education. Participants will receive training in *Reducing the Risk* and *Get*

Real About AIDS, two curricula found to be effective in reducing unintended pregnancy, STD and HIV. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education

Classes for New Driver Education Teachers—Butte rather than Havre???

MSU-Northern has received a request to deliver the three initial Traffic Education courses in Butte this year. Teachers successfully completing these eight credits will be provisionally endorsed to teach Traffic Education to high school students. In order to offer these courses in Butte, it is necessary that a minimum of 15 students complete and return the required forms and documentation along with the \$600 deposit (refundable if minimum number is not met). MSU-Northern needs to know ASAP this month (February). Email Bob Kurtz (rkurtz@msun.edu) or Janice Brady (jbrady@msun.edu) or contact by calling 1-800-662-6132 x 3738 or 3730.

Annual Traffic Education Conference –Billings April 24 – 26

Mark you calendars. The annual traffic education conference sponsored by the Montana Traffic Education Association (MTEA) and the Office of Public Instruction will be held at the Billings Hotel and Conference Center in Billings this year on April 24-26. Montana's new traffic education curriculum and how to use it will be a focus. Registration information will be available in early March in the MTEA newsletter and at the OPI traffic education web page www.opi.state.mt.us/driveded. For more information contact Jim Carroll at (406) 278-3285 or email tjcarrol@rocketmail.com.

REMINDER for Traffic Education Teacher Approval Renewals

Every traffic education teacher whose Montana teaching certificate expires this year must renew their approval to teach driver education—this includes those who have a traffic education endorsement. Approval to teach traffic education does not automatically renew with the renewal of the teaching certificate. A separate application must be completed to initiate the approval process which includes a check of the teachers driving record. For more information contact Fran Penner-Ray (fpenner-ray@mt.gov) (406) 444-4432.

Montana Arts Council (MAC): Arts Education Program

Artists in Schools and Communities grants

There are still funds available for the Artists in Schools and Communities grants. The Artists in Schools and Communities program supports a wide range of residencies (lasting from as short as a day to as long as two years) by professional working artists. You can download an application and read the guidelines at http://art.mt.gov/schools/schools_aiscguidelines.asp.

Using Folklife in the Classroom

The Folklife program has a wealth of resources for teachers in a new section on the web site at http://art.mt.gov/folklife/folklife_classintro.asp. Through this website, teachers can access [activity ideas](#) that represent a sampling of Montana's rich folklife. The hope is that teachers will expand upon these ideas and utilize additional folk artists in MAC's [registry](#), all of whom are available for classroom visits. The registry includes [best practices](#) of successful programs in Montana to give teachers models from which to draw ideas and to illustrate the positive results that teachers have experienced from using folklife in the classroom. For more information about folklife education, the registry provides [web links](#) to national and state organizations that are doing wonderful work in this area.

State of the Arts Newspaper, the only source of its kind, the Montana Arts Council's bi-monthly newspaper brings comprehensive arts information, events, and news to anyone who requests it,

free of charge within Montana. You can subscribe at http://art.mt.gov/resources/resources_soasubscribe.asp .

If you would like to sign up for the Montana Arts Council's **email newsletter** for arts educators (dance, music, theatre, visual arts) that lists opportunities and resources, email Beck McLaughlin at bemclaughlin@mt.gov or by call the Arts Education Hotline at 1-800-282-3092.

If you have additional questions please call Beck McLaughlin, Education Director, at the **Arts Education Hotline 1-800-282-3092** or email at bemclaughlin@mt.gov .

Annual "Best 100 Communities for Music Education" Now Accepting Entries

The National School Boards Association has once again joined forces with the American Music Conference and a coalition of other leading music and education organizations to present the annual "Best 100 Communities for Music Education" survey. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday, March 8, and NSBA encourages you to participate on behalf of your community. Anyone can complete the survey online at AMC's website, www.amc-music.org. The 2005 "Best 100" list will be released this spring.

After performing this survey for five years, the National School Boards Association has heard back from towns and cities across America that it has made a real difference to local music programs - not only as a spotlight on their successes, but as a shield at budget time. In addition, the host of media stories that appear each year about the survey and its outcome help raise awareness about music education as a national issue.

2005 Montana Telecommunications Association Scholarships: Two Scholarships - \$500 each

The Montana Telecommunications Association (MTA) Showcase Scholarship, is designed for dependents of full or part-time employees, current directors, or owners (or their spouse) of an operating telephone company in Montana. The operating telephone company must also be a member in good standing with the State Association. Applicants may also be dependents of the statewide staff or telephone company employees and directors. All applications must be received no later than March 1, 2005, and submitted to MTA no later than March 8, 2005. To receive a scholarship application, go to <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/2005ShowcaseScholar.pdf>.

Memorial Scholarships - \$750 each

The Montana Telecommunications Association (MTA) Memorial Scholarship is designed for any Montana student, regardless if their undergraduate studies will be completed at a Montana college or university or, at an out-of-state institution. The applicant must submit a completed application form, which is available from your local rural telephone cooperative or independent telephone system. You do not have to be a member of a telephone cooperative or independent system to apply for the scholarships. The applicant must also detail his or her goals in a personal statement. Two letters of recommendation from current teachers and one character reference letter may also be submitted with the application. To receive a scholarship application, go to

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/2005MemorialScholar.pdf> All applications must be submitted no later than March 31, 2005. The MTA Scholarship Committee will then make the final selection by April 23, 2005. If you cannot download an application or have any questions regarding the MTA Scholarships please contact Angela Joki, Office Manager, MTA, 208 North Montana Avenue, Suite 105, Helena, MT 59601, 406-442-4316.

Tomorrow25 Awards

Who are the high school juniors making a difference in your community?

Bentley College is proud to announce Tomorrow25: a competition to identify 25 high achieving students who are already making things happen in their world-and who may be tomorrow's leaders of business and society.

The Tomorrow 25 committee seeks outstanding young leaders who demonstrate initiative, citizenship, intelligence, technological savvy, cultural awareness, social responsibility, a passion for the real world of people and organizations, and a commitment to making positive things happen in their community and school. If you know a student who fits the description, be sure to send us your recommendation. An international panel of business leaders will judge the competition. For selection criteria and nomination forms, please visit www.bentley.edu/Tomorrow25.

Annual International Conference & Exhibition

The Association for Childhood Educational International's (ACEI) 2005 Annual International Conference & Exhibition will be taking place March 23-26, 2005 at the Grand Hyatt Washington, Washington D.C. For more info, visit www.ACEI.org or phone 1-800-423-3563.

2005 Essay Competition

The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans encourages high school students to participate in the 2005 student essay competition "Why should we study WWII History?" Submissions must be e-mailed to The National D-Day Museum by March 31, 2005, 5:00 CST. The Museum will accept the first 500 entries only. First place winner will receive \$500; second place will receive \$250; and third place will receive \$100. More information about the competition is available at www.ddaymuseum.org. If you have any questions, please contact Kenneth Hoffman 504-527-6012, ext.225, or at educator@ddaymuseum.org.